

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 BRUSSE 01622 261303Z

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 USIE-00

MC-02 IGA-01 CIAE-00 PM-03 INR-07 L-02 ACDA-05

NSAE-00 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 TRSE-00 SAJ-01 DODE-00

H-01 NSC-05 SS-15 EB-07 AID-05 /071 W

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O R 261240Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3223

INFO AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

C O N F I D E N T I A L BRUSSELS 1622

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, MASS, BE

SUBJECT: F-104 REPLACEMENT

REF: STATE 42449

1. WE BELIEVE THAT VAN DE KERCKHOVE ACCURATELY STATED PRESENT BELGIAN GOVERNMENT POSITION THAT IT WOULD LIKE TO MAKE F-104 REPLACEMENT CHOICE BY THE END OF MARCH. WE DO NOT BELIEVE THAT ANY ONE DOMESTIC POLITICAL FACTOR BY ITSELF IS BEHIND THIS POSITION, BUT RATHER THAT FOLLOWING COMBINATION OF FACTORS IS PUSHING TINDEMANS'S ADMINISTRATION IN THAT DIRECTION:

A) PUBLIC DEBATE AND CRITICISM OF GOVERNMENT OVER ISSUE CONTINUES TO GROW. INDUSTRY, LABOR, YOUTH, OPPOSITION PARTIES, PARLIAMENT AND EVEN RADICAL/PACIFIST ELEMENTS IN FLEMISH CVP (TINDEMANS' PARTY) ARE BEGINNING TO TAKE  
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PAGE 02 BRUSSE 01622 261303Z

POSITIONS ON GENERAL ISSUES OF (1) WHETHER TO REPLACE

F-104S AT ALL, (2) IF SO, TO WHAT EXTENT AND (3) EFFECT OF BELGIAN CHOICE ON FUTURE OF AIRCRAFT INDUSTRIES IN EUROPE, SHOULD F-16 BE SELECTED. TINDEMANS' GOVERNMENT HAS TAKEN POSITION IT WANTS TO MEET ITS NATO COMMITMENTS FULLY.

B) TINDEMANS' GOVERNMENT, WHICH HAS ONLY SLIM PARLIAMENTARY MAJORITY BASED ON COALITION OF PARTIES AND IS TROUBLED BY WORSENING INTERNAL ECONOMIC AND LINGUISTIC PROBLEMS, CANNOT AFFORD TO TEMPORIZE ON THIS MAJOR DECISION. ANY DELAY BEYOND THE END OF MARCH MIGHT RESULT IN GOVERNMENT GIVING IMPRESSION OF WEAKNESS.

2. VAN DE KERCKHOVE STATEMENT IS ALSO PROBABLY TACTICAL IN PART, I.E., EFFORT BY BELGIAN GOVERNMENT TO EXTRACT NOW ABSOLUTELY FINAL OFFERS FROM US, FRENCH AND SWEDISH GOVERNMENTS.

3. ISSUE IS, AS VAN DE KERCKHOVE SAID, POLITICAL HERE. THERE ARE NO FINANCIAL REASONS SUCH AS BUDGET CYCLE, MILITATING FOR BELGIAN GOVERNMENT DECISION BY THE END OF MARCH. FIRESTONE

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** FIGHTER AIRCRAFT, AIRCRAFT SALES, CONSORTIUMS  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 26 FEB 1975  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** GolinoFR  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
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**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
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**Executive Order:** GS  
**Errors:** N/A  
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**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
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**Reference:** 75 STATE 42449  
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**Review Authority:** GolinoFR  
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05 JUL 2006

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**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** F-104 REPLACEMENT  
**TAGS:** MARR, MASS, BE  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
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